

SHORT ALLOWANCE OF WATER.

On building a house, the first regard of the founder has generally been to the supply of water. The ancient patriarchs ordinarily pitched their tents at a well or a river. Modern builders in a city have no care on this score, for companies, with chartered rights, are empowered to supply every tenement, and are, by implication of the correlative duty, bound to supply them.

On the first apprehensions entertained by the water companies that Government, actuated by paternal feelings, would give the population pure living water to drink, these gentry walked softly, abated their excessive charges, and increased the supplies; but as soon as it was settled that their vested interests should be fully respected or bought out, straightway they reverted to the old practice of scant allowance and extortionate demands.

It may not be generally known, and it certainly has not been complained of in the volume of the press, that water companies have, and exercise, a power that no other individual or communities possess, viz., that of enforcing payment of their dues from parties who are not indebted! So, however, it is; and in the simplest way possible, debts due by defaulters are enforced against the unfortunate occupiers who succeed them in a tenement. *Ex. gr.*—A takes a house which B deserted, owing three quarters' rates: A applies to have the water laid on, which had been cut off for non-payment of the rate, but is answered, "No; you must first pay the defalcation of your predecessor, and 5s. the penalty for breaking the pipe." I took a house in Kensington Gore, found the water cut off, sent 5s. to the inspector to lay it on, but was answered that "No supply would be given until the defalcation of my predecessor should be paid up!" Incensed at the manifest injustice, not to say tyranny, of this legislation *en particulier*, I resolved not to comply; and having a well on the premises, I sank a pump, and am consequently constrained to the habit of *hard drinking*, as the rill of soft is withheld from me.

Now, that water companies should assume the right to levy dues by compulsion, in a way that no other creditor is entitled to do, seems strange, is inconsistent, and must be illegal; but that power they certainly have and exercise, and that in a most effective way, for, except in *well* cases such as mine, they may starve men into compliance.

To have an idea of the force of this power, one must have been at sea on short allowance of water: few there are who have experienced, even in cases of shipwreck, an utter privation of the element. Impurity of quality and stinted quantity are, however, bad enough, and easily appreciable.

What I would insist on is, the right of every house, of every inhabitant, to a full supply of water. Every individual is as naturally entitled to this element as to the air he breathes.

Should water companies have power to recover dues from people not indebted? or, in fact, any facilities of levying debts in account different from those which the law of the land provides for every other creditor? I maintain that they ought not; and, moreover, that every habitation should be amply supplied with water, whether poor or rich,—whether they pay or do not pay; and that rates chargeable in that behalf should be recoverable like any other debts, distress, process, or summons. Where there is nothing to seize, the return should be *nulla bond*. Courts of law may now, however, be advised of a more forcible dodge in the current theory of *nulla agna*.

The awful epidemic of last year softened some hard hearts, and so far had a beneficial effect. Pipes were conveyed into hotels that never had other water than what had been carried in pails by the inmates. There are, however, yet many poor dwellings without any supply; and I would instance, as a dangerous nuisance, the privies of a densely-peopled rookery or lane, called Park-lane, Kensington-gore, which fester and exhale pestilence, as though no patrician were within reach of infection.

If water be denied to the denizens of poor districts, a paternal government should provide fountains, wells, or pumps, or they should reopen the natural rivulets (Fleet-ditch amongst the number) with which a bounteous Provi-

dence irrigated the plains of Middlesex, but at the same time these should be guarded from impurities.

Doctor Reid might as well be invested with a power to withdraw by pneumatic skill air (the first element of the vital principle) from the chill abode of penury, and to dole it out in fitful blasts in the purlieus of filth, while he inflated the Lords and Commons to suffusion,—it would be as justifiable as stinting the poor in their equally indispensable supply of water.

QUONDAM

LAYING THE FIRST STONE OF THE BRISTOL HIGH CROSS.

A SPIRIT has certainly been awakened in Bristol, and is about its work. There is movement and life among the citizens, and they are evidently determined to go in and win. All Bristol went out, and got wet by the way, on the 8th inst., to see the first stone of the High Cross laid in College-green: the mayor (Mr. Habersfield) did it in his usual pleasant style, and the Freemasons in large numbers assisted.

In the course of his address, detailing the history and adventures of the original cross, the mayor said:—The Bristol High-Cross was first erected near the church of the Holy Trinity, or Christ Church with St. Ewen's consolidated. It was at first erected in the centre, where the four streets, viz. Broad-street, Wine-street, High-street, and Corn-street, meet. I find that the year 1373 may be deemed the era from which Bristol may date some of its greatest improvements; and the citizens, in commemoration of Edward the Third's separating it from the county of Gloucester and constituting it a county within itself, and fixing its pomerium or boundaries by an ample charter for that purpose, rebuilt the renowned cross on the very spot where the old one stood, embellished it in a most superb manner, and placed effigies of King Edward the Third, together with three preceding royal benefactors, very well carved for the time, in the vacant niches of the then perhaps defaced saints. Their gratitude and the loyalty of the citizens were the laudable motives to this undertaking; and I trust that, on the present occasion, the same feelings actuate those who, in the reign of our present beloved Queen Victoria, whom God bless and preserve, have contributed to the present undertaking. King John was placed northward, fronting Broad-street. He gave the city the first and very extensive charter of privileges, especially all the void ground on the banks of the river, thereby "to amend the town by building." The statue of King Henry the Third fronted Wine-street, eastward. He confirmed the charters of King Henry the Second. King John and himself granted a charter which joined Redcliff to Bristol, making it one corporate town. King Edward the Third was fixed towards Corn-street, westward. He made Bristol a county of itself. King Edward the Fourth was added, in 1461, to the other three figures, and was placed fronting High-street. There it stood, greatly admired from its associations and for its ornaments, which were very profuse, for at least 260 years; but in the year 1633 the city, having continued to receive fresh and repeated instances of royal favour, and the cross itself by this time perhaps wanting some necessary repairs, it was taken down in part, enlarged, and made higher, in the same style of architecture, and four other statues of kings were now added. Henry the Sixth was placed in a new niche eastward. He granted and confirmed all the charters of his predecessors. Queen Elizabeth was placed eastward: she had also confirmed the charters. King James the First was placed southward. King Charles the First northward: he granted a new charter, and sold the castle and its dependencies to the city, which, to the great annoyance of the inhabitants, was before out of the mayor's jurisdiction. By this additional superstructure, and the new figures, the cross became an object still more admired by strangers, and more esteemed by the citizens.

The cross will stand on five steps of Cornish granite, and will be about 44 feet high. The stone selected by the committee is the Nailsworth stone. The base will be 15 feet 6 inches square. There will be eight figures,—the

four before-named as in 1373 and 1461, when the figures of Henry the First stood eastward, Queen Elizabeth westward, Charles the First northward, and James the First southward.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

THE American mail has brought intelligence of the suspension of the contemplated railway across the isthmus of Panama. Can it be possible that the proprietors have already tapped a volcano?—A project for a railway, to enable the sea portion of the transit from England to New York to end at Cape Canoe, Nova Scotia, is attracting much attention.

"One of the most surprising circumstances attending the creation of railways," says the *Dublin University Magazine*, "is the amount of capital which, within a limited period, has been expended in their construction and equipment. According to the calculations supplied in a work before us, there were in operation, at the commencement of 1849, in different parts of the globe, a total length of 18,656 miles of railway, on which in capital 368,567,000*l.* had been actually expended. Besides this, it is estimated that there were, at the same epoch, in progress of construction, a further extent of 7,829 miles, the cost of which, when completed, would be 146,750,000*l.* Thus, when these latter lines shall have been brought into operation, the population of Europe and the United States (for it is there only that railways have made any progress) will have completed, within the period of less than a quarter of a century, 26,485 miles of railway; that is to say, a greater length than would entirely surround the globe, at a cost of above five hundred millions! To accomplish this stupendous work, human industry must have appropriated, out of its annual savings, twenty millions sterling for twenty-five successive years! Of this prodigious investment, 27 miles in every 100, and 54*l.* in every 100*l.* are appropriated to British railways."—Mr. Robert Stephenson was lately entertained at a public dinner in the new station, Neville-street, Newcastle, by a number of his friends and admirers.—The Great Northern line has been opened from London to Peterborough. The present London terminus is 400 or 500 yards north of King's-cross. The site of the old Small-pox Hospital, however, at New-road, is where the passenger station is to be erected. The line, for a great portion of the distance, passes through a level country. The first 14 miles are particularly heavy: the principal works are the tunnels near the London end, the Welwyn tunnel, the Welwyn viaduct, and the bridge over the Ouse. The viaduct consists of forty-two arches, each 30 feet wide and 97 feet in height: cost stated to have been between 70,000*l.* and 80,000*l.* The bridge over the Ouse is of cast-iron, with three arches of 75 feet span each. Some of the largest works are north of Huntingdon, with heavy embankments and cuttings. The fen works have involved difficulty in obtaining a foundation. The longest tunnel of seven or eight between London and Peterborough is that at North Mims, three-quarters of a mile in length, and the steepest gradient is 1 in 200. The carriages on the Great Northern are built of teak; and, instead of being painted, the grain of the wood is polished and highly varnished. A carriage, which would otherwise take two months to be fit for use, is thus made ready in a week. The second and third class are said to be vastly better than anything of the same stamp elsewhere.—The London and North-Western Company are erecting a milk market on their station in Lime-street, Liverpool, from designs by Mr. Woods, one of the engineers. It will be covered by an iron roof, by Mr. Turner, of Dublin. Such milk markets erected near the metropolitan termini of the various lines would be of vital importance to the Londoners, who would have an unequivocal interest in upholding them, if based, as they doubtless would be, on a more substantial foundation than the old "London chalk."—Several architects, says a Berwick paper, are busy preparing plans for a triumphal arch to be erected in the centre of the Berwick bridge, on her Majesty passing along the new line of railway in her progress to Scotland.—The works of the London-derry and Enniskillen line, between the